



HABITAT HAPPENINGS

A newsletter from the
RUNGE
CONSERVATION
NATURE CENTER

July and August 2002

Still Alive?

THANK A Bug!



Insects are essential to almost all terrestrial and fresh water ecosystems. Insects are the first to convert plant material into animal tissue, and they are eaten by other insects, amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, and mammals from shrews to bears. It is from these healthy ecosystems that we obtain oxygen, clean water, food, plant fibers, and trees —organic necessities of life.

Green plants are the only organisms that can convert the sun's energy to produce food, and about 80 percent of the flowering plants are dependent on insects for pollination. These include many of our orchard and crop plants, as well as forage plants for beef and dairy livestock.

Insects are important aerators of the soil. A single species of ant can excavate 1.5 tons of subsoil per acre! Insects are also important scavengers—second only to bacteria as decomposers of dung and dead plants and animals.



Insects

are outrageously numerous. Of the million-and-a-quarter species of animals known in the world, about a million of them are insects. Estimates for insects yet to be discovered range from nine to 30 million. There can be 30,000 of them in a single wheelbarrow load of forest soil. The best estimate for the total weight of the world population of insects is 27 billion tons —roughly six times the weight of our current human population!



Imagine, for a moment, a world without insects. No more splats on your windshield. No more flies on your food. No more termites in your house, mosquitoes on your neck, or fleas on your dog. At first, it seems like a world without insects would be a better world, indeed.

Now imagine a world without people, because without insects, you and I probably wouldn't be here. Here's why:

Of course, there are a few insects that are annoying, painful, or even costly, but only a fragment (about one percent) of all known insects are considered pests, and insects themselves are the major check on their own populations.

The next time you see a bug, stop and introduce yourself. Thank it. It's done you a big, big favor!

Kevin Lohraff, *Interpretive Programs Supervisor*

Volunteer News



Pearl Gentili—4,000 hours



Pearl joined the volunteer program in 1994, and is only the fourth volunteer to reach the 4,000-hour milestone. Pearl is often referred to as the "Food Queen," and has spent endless hours preparing refreshments for Runge special events and Kids' Club participants. Pearl was chosen as the Runge Volunteer of the Year in 1995—the same year she won a statewide award, Missouri Volunteer of the Year.

Jan Alexander—2,000 hours



Since 1993, Jan has donated her time to help with numerous Scout camps, special events, and programs. She has probably given more Scout programs than anyone could ever count. Jan also tells Native American nature stories, and picks up trash along the highway at Runge.

Crystal Lueckenhoff—2,000 hours



Crystal also became a volunteer in 1993, and coordinates the mailing and return of our program evaluations for teachers. Crystal tirelessly organizes Runge's growing libraries, and has completed a library decimal system and a searchable database. Crystal was chosen the 1994 Runge Volunteer of the Year.

Thanks for your hard work and dedication, Pearl, Jan, and Crystal!

IT'S FOR YOU!

Calling All Scout Leaders!

Coming soon, our nature center will have "Scout Packs" available for leader use. These packs will have activities and goodies to help you achieve several requirements for badges. Look for complete details in the next *Habitat Happenings* or call Naturalist Andrea Putnam for more information.

Lobby Exhibits

July—Otter Prints

Colorful photographs by Glenn Chambers featuring Missouri's river otter will be on display this month.

August—Intarsia Carvings

See realistic wildlife art using the natural beauty of wood created by Ken and Carol Altheuser, amateur artists. Carol does the layout and finish work while Ken does the inlay using various wood grains and species to create the mosaic wildlife art.

Highlights from the

4th Annual Wildlifers Quilt Show



Interpreting
nature
through
the eye
of a
needle.



The Wildlifers are a group of individuals over 50 years of age who meet monthly at the nature center to learn about the featured topic while creating a patchwork block. Refer to the program listing for dates and times, if interested in joining this elite group.

Events for...

July

Registration for all programs begins on July 1st.
Call 573/526-5544 to make your reservation.



"4th of July Special"

4 Thursday

Native Butterflies and Moths 3 PM -- Families

Fireworks brighten our sky at night, but butterflies are doing it by day. Learn the best way to attract butterflies and moths to your gardens and homes. Spend some time with a naturalist, taking a closer look at the biology of these insects. Learn which native plants attract these magnificent creatures. Reservations not required.

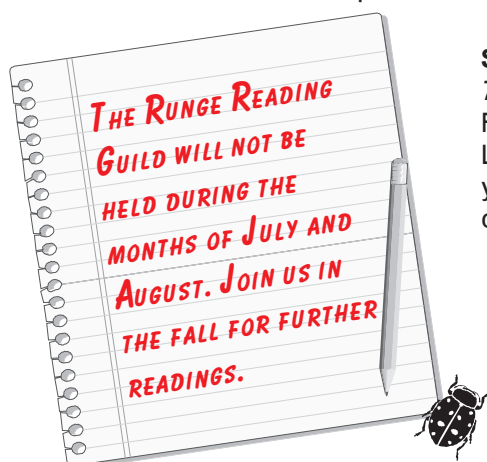
13 Saturday

The Runge Hiking Club

8 AM-5:30 PM -- 18 Years and older

Each month, we'll meet at the nature center, car pool to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots, and hike one or two of the best trails. A naturalist will lead the hikes.

Meramec State Park has more caves than any other park in the nation—45 to be exact. We'll start out with a 90-minute tour of **Fisher Cave**, the park's finest. After lunch, we'll have a naturalist-led tour of the new **Meramec Mosaic Natural Area**. We'll sample hiking trails through chinkapin savannas, glades, and onto bluff-top overlooks of the Meramec River (approximately 2.5 miles.) Bring a jacket and \$3.00 for the cave tour. Bring your lunch, water, hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.



2002 Summer Splash

Check out page 5 for information about these programs.

18 Thursday

Wildlifers—Quilt Block

10-11:30 AM, 1-2:30 PM, 3:30-5 PM, and 6-7:30 PM -- 50+ Years

The Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery encountered a "Den of rattle Snakes" near Rocheport, Missouri. Our quilt block for this month depicts this venomous creature. Reservations required.

24 Wednesday

Otterly Amazing!

6:30 PM -- Families

Join Glenn Chambers and his pair of live river otters for a fascinating program that explains otter life history and the successful restoration project. You'll learn why the otters need management today to ensure their place in Missouri's varied habitats. Reservations required.

25 Thursday

Summer Bird Feeding

7 PM -- Families

Feed birds in the summer? Why not? Learn tips and ideas on how to attract your favorite feathered friends for a closer look. Reservations not required.

Snake Feeding

July 2, 16, and 30
at 3pm



It Out!

From crayons and glue to tracks and treks, there's something new and exciting every weekend at Runge. You don't need to call, just stop by between 10 AM and Noon on Saturdays or from 1 to 3 PM on Sundays. It is an opportunity you won't want to miss!

For the little ones...



Boisterous Bugs

What's all that noise?

Bugs? The sounds of summer are all around us.

Bug sounds are as distinct as bird songs. Come and join our bug chorus this month. Reservations required.

Little Acorns 3-6 years of age

Tuesday, July 9 – 1 PM

Tuesday, July 9 – 6 PM

Saturday, July 13 – 10 AM

Tuesday, July 30 – 10 AM

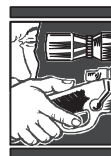
Babes in the Woods

Birth - 2 years of age

Thursday, July 18 – 10 AM

Saturday, July 20 – 10 AM

Tuesday, July 23 – 1 PM



Hunter Education Course.

Sign up now for the Missouri Hunter Education Course!

Learn how to hunt safely and responsibly in this course. Ten hours

of instruction are required and you must be at least eleven years of age to participate.

Students sixteen years of age and under must bring proof of age. Reservations required.

July 25 – 6 PM - 9 PM

July 26 – 6 PM - 10 PM

July 27 – 8 AM - Noon



Events for...

August

Registration for all programs begins on July 1st.

Call 573/526-5544 to make your reservation.



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From crayons and glue to tracks and treks, there's something new and exciting every weekend at Runge. You don't need to call, just stop by between 10 AM and Noon on Saturdays or from 1 to 3 PM on Sundays. It is an opportunity you won't want to miss!

For the little ones...

Snakes Alive!

It only makes sense to be curious about an animal that "smells" with its tongue. We will investigate the five senses of the snake this month.



Sssssseeee you there!
Reservations required.

Little Acorns 3-6 years of age

Tuesday, August 6 – 1 PM
Tuesday, August 6 – 6 PM
Sunday, August 11 – 2 PM
Tuesday, August 13 – 10 AM

Babes in the Woods

Birth - 2 years of age

Thursday, August 8 – 10 AM
Friday, August 16 – 10 AM
Saturday, August 17 – 10 AM

7 Wednesday

Night Crawlers: In Search of Bedtime Bugs

7 PM -- Families

Grab your flashlight and take a night stroll with a naturalist to uncover the night insects in the woods of Runge. We'll begin with an indoor orientation then head outside to discover the insects that thrive in the night. Along the way we will visit several bait stations. Please bring your own flashlight, wear hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

10 Saturday

Wild Edibles

10 AM -- Families

Berries, nuts, leaves, and roots. There's a smorgasbord in your backyard! Learn about some of Missouri's wild edibles—what to look for and how to prepare them. Reservations required.

16 Friday

Insect Intrigue

7 PM -- Families

They're dressed for success, accounting for nearly 80% of all animals in existence today. Join our own bug enthusiast to unravel the many wonders of our buggy world. Learn the differences between insects and spiders, and view incredible pictures of our native invertebrates. Reservations not required.



17 Saturday

The Runge Hiking Club

8 AM-6 PM -- 18 Years and older

It's hard to get enough of **Rock Bridge Memorial State Park**, with its wooded slopes, wet-weather waterfalls, and of course the natural bridge and all those sinkholes! We'll begin on the varied landscape of the **Spring Brook Trail** (2.5 miles), where a friendly, shallow (3-10 inches deep), and refreshing wade is scheduled just before the 2-mile mark. After lunch, we'll hike the **Sinkhole Trail** (1.5 miles), which begins at the historic site of Pierpont (French for "rock bridge.") Bring your lunch, water, hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

22 Thursday

Wildlifers—Quilt Block

10-11:30 AM, 1-2:30 PM, 3:30-5 PM, and 6-7:30 PM -- 50+ Years

Time to go "Plum Picking." This fruit was used in Western Missouri by William Clark and the Corps of Discovery. Make a reservation to make this "Plum" block. Reservations required.

Did you know?

► **Not all animals make noise with their voices. Crickets chirp by rubbing their wings together. Cicadas call by moving flaps of skin on their abdomens in and out.**



Fish Tank and Turtle Feeding

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 3pm during July & August

Snake Feeding

August 13 and 27 at 3pm





Conservation Kids' Club

Welcome to the outdoor world! Join Conservation Kids' Club, a fun club created for kids 6-13 years old who love to explore nature and learn about wildlife. Each month we discover awesome new stuff and make great friends! Make plans to join over 500 other members of the coolest club around! Come to one of these meetings and we'll sign you up.

Forest Frenzy!

Tuesday, July 16, 2002

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Pollywogs (Ages 6-8)
and Bullfrogs (Ages 9-13) combine for this meeting.

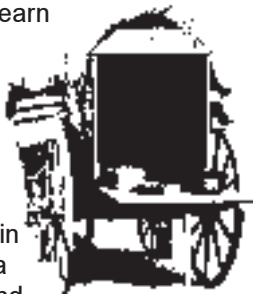
Discover why the Forest is so "Treerific" and why we need to protect it from wildfires. Smokey Bear will be here in person to welcome you to our friendly forest! Take an up-close look at the animals that call the forest their home. Climb our fire tower for a birds-eye view into how wildfires are spotted. Step into the shoes of a fire-fighter and test your skills at dampening that blaze! Join Jan, George, and volunteers for a fun forest frenzy!

Pioneer Children...Playing and working on the Frontier

Tuesday, August 20, 2002

6:00 PM - 7:15 PM Pollywogs (Ages 6-8) have their meeting.
7:30 PM - 8:45 PM Bullfrogs (Ages 9-13) have their meeting.

Growing up in a pioneer family in the 1800's was an adventure, but also quite a lot of work! Learn from a real-to-life frontier woman, Martha Daniels, outfitted in the clothing of the time. Martha will lead us in exploring the childhood chores, responsibilities, fun and games of the pioneer children traveling the Oregon Trail. We'll make a real old-fashioned toy and feast on trail treats. Join in the spirit of the evening by dressing up as a pioneer. There will be a costume contest and everyone wins a prize just for entering!



Hey Parents!

While big brother/sister attend Conservation Kids' Club, your pre-schooler can be involved in a Little Acorns program at the same time!

Little Acorns Program (3-6 years of age)

Reservations not required.

July 16 ~ 6 PM



Boisterous Bugs

What's all that noise? Bugs? The sounds of summer are all around us. Bug sounds are as distinct as bird songs. Come and join our bug chorus this month.

August 20 ~ 6 PM

Snakes Alive!

It only makes sense to be curious about an animal that "smells" with its tongue. We will investigate the five senses of the snake this month. Sssssseeeeeee you there!



2002 Summer Splash

Bugs Don't Bug Me—You?

*They're in our house,
they're in the air.
They're on our windshield,
they're in our hair.
(But not too often, we hope!)
Bugs are everywhere!*



Buzz-zzz . . . bzzzzzzzz . . . ga-zeeeeee! Come to the "Boisterous Bugs" puppet show and learn how some insects communicate. Have fun with all kinds of bug stuff to find out why insects are more than hairy, icky, creepy-crawlies. We'll stir the air and sweep the grass with nets to capture our specimens, and learn how important insects are in the natural world. Let's go "buggy!" Reservations required.

The Pond Café—Who's Eating Who?

Come dine at the Pond Café! Find out who's who on the menu, and who's eating who! Enjoy a buffet of facts about food chains and cycles that happen every day at the Pond Café. Watch live animals up close as they "chow down" on their favorite pond water cuisines. Stroll to our local pond to participate in the food chain yourself—go fishing! We'll supply the poles, bait and tackle, and even throw in a real down-home fish fry to tantalize your taste buds. Reservations required.

Bugs Don't Bug Me—You?

9 AM - 11 AM

July 10 Daycares (Preschool-1st grade)

July 12 Daycares (2nd-5th grade)

The Pond Café—Who's Eating Who?

9 AM - 11 AM

July 16 K-5th grade

July 17 K-5th grade

July 19 Parent/care-giver with Preschool child (3-6 years old)

Bugs Don't Bug Me—You?

9 AM - 11 AM

July 24 K-5th grade

July 25 K-5th grade

July 26 Parent/care-giver with Preschool child (3-6 years old)



Runge Conservation Nature Center

is located in western Jefferson City. From U. S. 50, exit on Highway 179. Travel north on 179 for 1/4 mile to the Nature Center entrance on the left. The Nature Center is open Monday through Saturday 8 AM to 5 PM and Noon to 5 PM on Sundays. Closed New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. No admission fee.
PHONE: 573/526-5544 FAX: 573/526-4496
<<http://www.conservation.state.mo.us>>



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DONNA SCHULTE
CYNTHIA ROGERS

LOOking for ADVENTURE?

THEN CHECK OUT OUR NEW ADVENTURE PACKS! ADVENTURE packs CAN BE CHECKED OUT FROM THE FRONT DESK, AND CAN help you enjoy the trails at RUNGE. They include: binoculars, magnifying glass, field guides, NET, bug box, clipboard, pencil, and journal paper.

COME CHECK OUT AN ADVENTURE!

